



100 Tools for Teachers for Building Self Esteem in Children

A Radio Broadcast by
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A transcript of a radio broadcast by Lionel D C Hartley

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BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

You cannot sing? Well, others can.

You cannot dance? but others do.

And ever since the world began there have been certain folk like you who cannot dance, and cannot sing, nor weave a play nor write a book.

But you can sew? Most anything? And you are quite an expert as a cook?

And you can draw a little bit, amuse your friends with pen and ink?

You make folk laugh - this you admit. You have a lot of gifts, I think.

Oh, foolish one, to sigh and fret because you're not as some folk are.

Suppose a plant of mignonette withered because 'twas not a star!

Be what you are, dear girl (dear boy/dear friend), with pride.

Accept your limits with good grace; the world is varied, very wide; for each of us there is a place.

Within your sphere be quite content, be proud of work that is your own, and to life's complex instrument with sweetness add your mite of tone.

(Wilhelmina Stitch, Silver Linings, Methuen, London, 1947 p6)

Whether you are a school teacher, a Sunday or Sabbath school teacher, a cub or scout leader, a parent, a care-giver - these ways a teacher can build self esteem in children can be modified to boost the children in your life.

Address the children by name. Use their name often throughout your conversations with them.

Greet children at the door.

Seek their opinion and show an interest in their advice and ideas.

Put their work in special categories on the wall to get more work on the wall.

Put more stickers on work handed in, using colourful stamps or stickers with abandon.

Continually demonstrate an attitude of gratitude: A slave named Androcles once escaped from his master and fled to the forest. As he was wandering about there he came upon a Lion lying down moaning and groaning. At first he turned to flee, but finding that the Lion did not pursue him, he turned back and went up to him. As he came near, the Lion put out his paw, which was all swollen and bleeding, and Androcles found that a huge thorn had got into it, and was causing all the pain. He pulled out the thorn and bound up the paw of the Lion, who was soon able to rise and lick the hand of Androcles like a dog.

Then the Lion took Androcles to his cave, and every day used to bring him meat from which to live. But shortly afterwards both Androcles and the Lion were captured, and the slave was sentenced to be thrown to the Lion, after the latter had been kept without food for several days. The Emperor and all his Court came to see the spectacle, and Androcles was led out into the middle of the arena. Soon the Lion was let loose from his den, and rushed bounding and roaring towards his victim. But as soon as he came near to Androcles he recognised his friend, and fawned upon him, and licked his hands like a friendly dog. The Emperor, surprised at this, summoned Androcles to him, who told him the whole story. Whereupon the slave was pardoned and freed, and the Lion let loose to his native forest. An attitude of gratitude is no platitude, but an exactitude, which prevents solitude.

Create strength acknowledgement circles. - Focus on one person for one or two minutes, sharing things you have liked most about that person during the week. Rotate.

Create a journal of positive things they do - praise them

Make a personal list of positive expressions, words of encouragement, honest recognition statements, etc. to draw upon as needed.

Help them to belong to a team or group by encouraging team-work. Once upon a time it occurred to the Members of a certain Body that they were doing all the work and the Belly was having all the food. So they held a meeting, and after a long discussion, decided to strike work till the Belly consented to take its proper share of the work. So for a day or two, the Hands refused to take the food, the Mouth refused to receive it, and the Teeth had no work to do. But after a day or two the Members began to find that they themselves were not in a very active condition: the Hands could hardly move, and the Mouth was all parched and dry, while the Legs were unable to support the rest. So thus they found that even the Belly in its dull quiet way was doing necessary work for the Body, and that all must work together or the Body will go to pieces.

Have children set goals they can actually reach. - Long ago, as the fable goes, the mice had a general council to consider what measures they could take to outwit their common enemy, the Cat. Some said this, and some said that; but at last a young mouse got up and said he had a proposal to make, which he thought would meet the case. "You will all agree," said he, "that our chief danger consists in the sly and treacherous manner in which the enemy approaches us. Now, if we could receive some signal of her approach, we could easily escape from her. I venture, therefore, to propose that a small bell be

procured, and attached by a ribbon round the neck of the Cat. By this means we should always know when she was about, and could easily retire while she was in the neighbourhood.” This proposal met with general applause, until an old mouse got up and said: “That is all very well, but who is to bell the Cat?” The mice looked at one another and nobody spoke. Then the old mouse said: “It is easy to propose impossible remedies.” Goals need to be easily achieved. Keep a tally of the goals achieved, both short and long-term goals. Draw on this tally to motivate and praise when appropriate.

Keep track of positive statements they make and the positive behaviours they display.

Make a note of when they carry out expected tasks without being reminded and when they carry out unexpected tasks without being asked.

Have each child build a file of strengths on index cards and every time they think of something they are good at, encourage them to write it down.

Share with the children some of your own processes of development - provide a healthy role model for them. One fine day two Crabs came out from their home to take a stroll on the sand. “Child,” said the mother crab, “you are walking very ungracefully. You should accustom yourself, to walking straight forward without twisting from side to side.” “Please, mother,”

said the young one, “if you can set the example yourself, I will follow you.” Example is the best precept.

Discipline patiently, creatively, firmly. Be consistent and kind. The Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger. Suddenly they saw a traveller coming down the road, and the Sun said: “I see a way to decide our dispute. Whichever of us can cause that traveller to take off his cloak shall be regarded as the stronger. You begin.” So the Sun retired behind a cloud, and the Wind began to blow as hard as it could upon the traveller. But the harder he blew the more closely did the traveller wrap his cloak round him, till at last the Wind had to give up in despair. Then the Sun came out and shone in all his glory upon the traveller, who soon found it too hot to walk with his cloak on. Kindness has more of an effect than severity.

Show love and appreciation with appropriate affection.

Use powerful praise: -That was really great! -Good work, Johnny!

Use specific praise: -Your homework had every single answer correct and was really neat.

Use descriptive praise: -Your's was a model for other assignments.

Use affective praise: tell how it effected you, -I loved it when...; -I was inspired by...

Share your feelings and interests, your secret self

Make rules which build connectiveness and not barriers -You can, if... (when)

Encourage decision making and wise choosing. Deliberately create situations where intelligent choices can be made. The frog - he had a problem. His pond was far too green. Another's pond was bluer (He heard the birds had seen). But Froggie had an answer: he'd suck up all the green, and so he bought a bath sponge - the biggest ever seen! Well, sponges have no manners. They suck up good and bad. And very soon an empty pond was all that poor frog had. A sponge does no deciding - only you can choose. Expose your mind to evil, and you will surely lose. By choosing what you see and hear; what you eat and do, then you control the input and you won't get sucked in too! (A Sponge Knoweth No Discrimination - A fable by Lionel Hartley. ©31/3/98)

Set up ways for the children to share and then acknowledge them for it - even if corny Eg. a standing ovation in class.

Use awards, certificates & diplomas with due pomp and ceremony.

Encourage children to be able to be different and to

share their differences. The Hares were so persecuted by the other beasts, they did not know where to go. As soon as they saw a single animal approach them, off they used to run. One day they saw a troop of wild Horses stampeding about, and in quite a panic all the Hares scuttled off to a lake near by, determined to drown themselves rather than live in such a continual state of fear. But just as they got near the bank of the lake, a troop of Frogs, frightened in their turn by the approach of the Hares scuttled off, and jumped into the water. "Truly," said one of the Hares, "things are not so bad as they seem: There is always someone worse off than yourself."

Increase outlets for creative expression - handing in assignments recorded on cassette tape, video, Computer animation (Eg. Microsoft® Powerpoint or Lotus Freelance Graphics), drama, or song.

Encourage the positive use of the imagination - constructive and reconstructive

When a wrong answer is given encourage them to think of ways the answer could be right.

Allow children to assist in planning - class or family council meetings. A Lion used to prowl about a field in which Four Oxen used to dwell. Many a time he tried to attack them; but whenever he came near they turned their tails to one another, so that whichever

way he approached them he was met by the horns of one of them. At last, however, they fell a-quarrelling among themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field. Then the Lion attacked them one by one and soon made an end of all four. In the unity of planning there is strength.

Share with the children how they can and do influence others - -When you said this, I felt...

Encourage problem solving - support and encourage rather than do it for them.

Chunk down problems into sizes they are able to do and reward each step

Encourage the value of friendships and model how to gain and retain friends. Once when a Lion was asleep a little Mouse began running up and down upon him; this soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws to swallow him. "Pardon, O King," cried the little Mouse: "forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?" The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him that he lifted up his paw and let him go. Some time after the Lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who desired to carry him alive to the King, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a wagon to carry him on. Just then the little Mouse happened to pass by, and

seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts. "Was I not right?" said the little Mouse, "Little people can still have and be friends and little friends may prove to be great friends."

Teach and role model a diversity of responses of emotion. Eg. disappointment - ask how each child responds.

Create special responsibilities, e.g. a monitor system, and praise their efforts.

Give children feedback and acknowledgement on every they do. For every positive action there must be a positive and encouraging reaction.

Be an example of Christian living - It has been well said, -God has great and wonderful things to display if he finds suitable showcases. (Sunday School Times - cited in Knights Master Book of New Illustrations, Wm B Eerdmans, Michigan 1956. p73)

Finally... Children learn what they live.

If a child lives with criticism, He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame, He learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, He learns justice.

If a child lives with security, He learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, He learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, He learns to find love in the world. (Children Learn What They live -

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END OF TRANSCRIPT